



# Have boat, will travel



Every inch a blue water cruiser, the Rustler 42 combines traditional good looks with modern hydrodynamics. **Duncan Kent** climbs aboard.

Photos: Rick Buettner/  
Hornsley

**D**rop your hook in any of the most remote waters of the World and sooner or later you'll have a Rustler join you. These boats are timeless Corinthians of the sea – built for people who want to go places most casual sailors would shun. In the 27 years that Rustler has been making yachts, some 120 of its renowned 36s have been launched and now the faster, roomier but equally steadfast 42 is set to carry on the marque in an equally resolute manner.

I'm often asked what boat I would choose if I were to set off on a world cruise – a tricky question

indeed, because during my 15 years of boat testing I've filled many a note book with ideas that I'd like to see developed in my own blue water cruiser. But I can say with all honesty that, since its inception, the Rustler 42 has been, and will likely remain, high on my list of ideal ocean-crossing yachts. One of the reasons is they can be customised, within reason, to the owner's requirements and the small Cornish yard thrums to the sound of local craftsmen and shipwrights doing what they've done for most of their lives – and probably their fathers too.

The Rustler 42 is a strikingly

good-looking yacht with a performance potential than belies her conservative styling.

She's entirely in proportion, so from the water, her seductively rising sheer sweeping up to her prominent, overhanging bow gives her the understated elegance of a timeless blue water classic.

Beneath her waterline, however, she sports comparatively shallow fore and aft sections, despite her long and deep encapsulated keel. The wet bits have had the Stephen Jones magic applied and anyone who's ever sailed on one of Jones' more performance orientated yachts will know what I mean.

He has the extraordinary knack of getting his lines just right – not through the use of smart CAD programs on a PC, but more usually by sketching them out on a beer mat and fiddling around with them until they look right. And they almost always are! It takes a great deal of skill to instil a yacht with a slick performance and manage to incorporate the more down-to-earth features that make her a veritable 4x4 of the sea, but with the Rustler 42 Jones seems to have managed with his customary unruffled flair.

Her encapsulated lead keel not only eliminates the usual corrosion

problems associated with rusty cast iron keel and keel bolts, but also allows the fuel and water tanks to be installed directly above the keel to keep the weight down low. Her sturdy propeller shaft log is far less prone to damage than the more usual P-bracket arrangement found on many modern designs and she has a chunky skeg, which gives plenty of support to the rudder and protects it from pot lines and other passing flotsam.

Every 42 built so far has had the cutter rig option, which is understandable given that each has set off across oceans within weeks of launching. Rustler owners tend

to sail long passages in all weathers and sea conditions and the cutter rig offers them a sail 'gearbox', rather like a 4x4 car with a low ratio selector. If all hell breaks loose in the middle of the Atlantic, then a triple-reefed mainsail and staysail will give you enough power to continue on under sail. In storm force conditions this can be reduced to a trysail and storm staysail, reducing the sail area to a minimum, but more importantly bringing the centre of effort towards the centre of the boat, so even in a F10 she will battle on in a stable and safe manner.

The Rustler hulls are moulded

by hand a little further up the river Fal, at Penryn, then shipped to Falmouth for fitting out. Full length foam stringers and cross beams are moulded into the solid GRP hull beneath the floor bearers and full width frames dissipate the rig loads into a wide area of the hull. The deck and superstructure is a balsa sandwich for lightness and insulation and the bulkheads are all bonded to the hull for added strength. The deck is bolted to an up stand on the hull, then bonded over and capped with a substantial teak cap rail, onto which are mounted sizeable cleats and stout stanchion bases. »



➤ The Rustler's interior is roomy, comfortable, well organised and offers a sense of security at sea particularly in heavy weather.



**Down Below**

Her generous beam makes this a spacious boat below, although headroom could be a problem for those over 1.90m (6ft 3in) tall. All the joinery on Rustlers is carried out by hand. The furniture is made in their workshops by experienced carpenters then installed in the hull. There are no inner mouldings other than the two heads, which are designed that way for easy cleaning. This method of fitting out is laborious and expensive, which is why they're not the cheapest 42-footers around, but the owner ends up with a unique and lovingly crafted interior pretty much tailored to his own requirements. Rustler will do its best to fit her out to your specifications – the only limitation being the position of the bulkheads. You might get a similar standard of craftsmanship from some other well known boat builders, but try asking them to move the furniture about – you probably won't get very far. Oddly enough, most owners go for more or less the standard layout and looking at it from the point of view of a long-term live-aboard I can see why. Within the limitations of a 42ft hull, there really are very few modifications that would improve on what is already a sensibly appointed

interior for a blue water cruiser. She has good sea berths, a safe, workable galley at sea, a heads near the companionway for nipping in with wet oilies, a large wet locker, machinery room for generators, water makers etc, an engine that you can sensibly work on at sea and a proper navigation station. Her saloon is warm and cosy with plenty of beautiful wood around to give her that 'real boat' feel, yet it exudes practicality. Settees are long (2.00m/6ft 6in) and straight with lee cloths, making ideal berths at sea. There are well placed grab rails all around and lockers have deep fiddled shelves and doors with good catches. There is also plenty of room behind and under the seating for all the usual cruising paraphernalia, yet it is luxurious enough to entertain six guests for dinner at her beautiful, hand-made teak table. My only complaint is that none of the portlights open – a seaworthy feature maybe, but you'll miss the lack of circulation in warmer climes. There are numerous all weather vents, however. Her galley has ample space for preparation and cooking and its U-shape prevents the cook from flying around at sea. It also enables him/her to reach all the important areas while strapped in by the bum strap. There are a full size cooker,

twin deep sinks, large fridge, microwave, oodles of stowage in numerous lockers and drawers, a proper gash bin and excellent overhead lighting. One feature that surprises first time visitors is the engine box, in the centre of the boat, beside the galley. While it provides extra galley worktop and a superb place to sit and take your boots off, most importantly it means you have excellent, all round access to the engine without even removing the companionway steps. Of course the real reason for its somewhat uncommon positioning is to keep the weight in the middle of the boat to contribute to her sea kindly motion. Using the engine, fuel and water tanks as extra ballast results in less weight in the keel – increasing her performance without jeopardising stability. The navigation station is just that – an area of the boat that is entirely dedicated to navigating the boat. It doesn't double up as extra galley worktop or fold away to allow another person to squeeze in at the table – it remains the hallowed ground that all serious skippers like to keep to themselves. She has a full size, forward facing chart table with its own comfortable seat and even the electrical switch panel has been located behind this area,

over the quarter berth, so as to provide more console space for a comprehensive instrument array. Furthermore, beneath the quarter berth just aft of the nav station, is a large chart drawer capable of taking a host of unfolded, worldwide charts – with more stowage inside the chart table itself. Beside the quarter berth to starboard is the first of the two heads. It's a good size with over 1.88m (6ft 2in) headroom and is well appointed with shower, teak grating and electric drain. At the



back is a large wet locker and behind that a further door to the machinery room, which on this boat houses the generator and water maker. If you don't need either, then this makes a huge, full depth cockpit locker. She has a single after cabin. The tapered double berth, which measures 2.00m L x 1.62m W (Head) x 1.06m W (Foot) (6ft 6in x 5ft 4in x 3ft 6in), has a split mattress with a lee cloth to make the inside berth useable at sea. There's plenty of good stowage in lockers and on well fiddled shelves; headroom is 1.88m (6ft 2in) in the dressing area. Two opening ports offer good ventilation and a fixed one adds to the natural light. Under the berth are the 100Ah engine battery and two 105Ah service batteries, charged by a powerful 100A engine alternator. Forward of the main bulkhead is the master cabin with its large vee berth measuring a generous 2.10m L x 2.08m W (6ft 10in x 6ft 9in) and an ensuite heads that's almost identical to the aft one, minus the wet locker. The cabin has six clothes lockers above the berth, a large hanging locker and drawers in the dressing area, and two bins under the berth, which also houses the holding tank. Headroom is 1.92m (6ft 4in) under the hatch.

**On deck**

Her layout on deck, like the rest of the boat, is more a result of seaworthy design than a style statement. Everything is where you'd expect it to be and fortunately the bottom line scrimpers haven't been allowed a say in the quality and quantity of deck gear. The side decks are wide and accessible the whole way around the boat and handrails are full length. Stanchions and cleats are stoutly mounted atop the wide teak cap rail and her foredeck is well organised for anchoring, with a chunky twin bow roller, chain cleat, electric windlass and deep chain locker. Her deep, safe cockpit is not so wide that you can't brace against the opposite seat and the seat backs/coamings are nicely angled and teak capped with a wide step forward for moving onto the deck. A high bridgedeck keeps green water from venturing below in heavy seas; winches are all by Andersen and are well sized. The two-speed 58ST primaries are mounted just a little far forward for the helmsman to reach easily, but I expect many will use the 42ST spinnaker winches for the yankee sheets when sailing singlehanded. The staysail sheets lead to the two 46ST coachroof winches via Spinlock cars, as do the



**Top (clockwise from top):** A good size and extremely well equipped galley with plenty of stowage space and decent work surfaces; it might be a slightly unusual arrangement, but positioning the engine right in the middle of the boat, like this, makes it considerably easier to service it; a spacious heads and shower compartment; deep and commodious cockpit lockers take all the deck gear; wide teak laid decks are easy to negotiate. **Above:** Mike checking the chart at the well-appointed navigation station.

reefing lines, outhaul and kicker. The headsail halyards are at the mast as standard, hoisted by a winch on the mast. Her wheel is large, but there's a wide cut-out around it and the mainsheet traveller is directly in front of a massive grab frame, just forward of the pedestal. All the cockpit horizontal surfaces are teak as standard, but adding teak decks would cost a further £12,290. Still,

she looks pretty good with plain decks thanks to the impressive capped bulwarks. If you have the version with the machinery space to starboard, you'll end up with two shallowish lockers in the cockpit. But then there's another line locker and a large gas locker under the helm seat and two much deeper lazarette lockers for your heavy cruising gear, such as dinghies etc. ➤

# NEW BOAT TEST



## Rustler 42

<b>LOA</b>	12.81m	42ft
<b>LWL</b>	10.22m	33ft 6in
<b>Beam</b>	4.06m	13ft 4in
<b>Draught</b>	1.82m	6ft 2in
<b>Displacement</b>	11,791kg	26,000lb
<b>Ballast</b>	4,671kg	10,300lb
<b>Sail Area (sloop/cutter)</b>	103.13m <sup>2</sup> /107.31 m <sup>2</sup>	1,110ft <sup>2</sup> /1,155ft <sup>2</sup>
<b>Fuel</b>	340ltr	75gal
<b>Water</b>	500ltr	110gal
<b>Berths</b>	8 max	
<b>Engine/transmission</b>	50hp Beta BV2203/ Hurth HBV150 gearbox	
<b>Final drive</b>	Shaft driven, fixed 3-bladed propeller	
<b>RCD category</b>	A-Ocean	
<b>STIX No.</b>	41.49	
<b>Angle of Vanishing Stability</b>	142°	

**Designer** Stephen Jones

**Builder** Rustler Yachts, Falmouth, Cornwall 01326 310120 [www.rustleryachts.com](http://www.rustleryachts.com)

**Price** £303,150. Price includes: fully battened three-reef mainsail, lazyjacks, zip bag, sprayhood, jackstays, gas kicker, spinnaker pole, teak cockpit, electric windlass, 28kg CQR anchor and 60m x 3/8in chain, warps and fenders, pressurised hot water, 2 x 105Ah domestic batteries, volt/ammeter, 70A alternator.



### THE OWNERS

The owners of *Quivira II* are Michael and Patricia Hornsley from Halifax. Mike works part time as an engineer while Tricia is a director of her own firm organising computers for the disabled. Although *Quivira II*'s homeport is Fleetwood, they spend a lot of time cruising all over Europe.

The day after our test they were off on a non-stop passage to NW Spain for a few weeks of relaxation, after which Mike plans to sail her to the Azores singlehanded. Their previous boat was a Tom Thumb 24.

### Rig and sails

Although a sloop rig can be built with a 140 per cent furling genoa, only cutters have been supplied so far because it seems to suit her. The Seldén mast and boom are suitably large and there are no frills with the set up. Stays are 1x19 strand, 10mm diameter all round. Fittings and terminals are top quality and there's a full complement of them to support the mast via two pairs of straight spreaders. Removable running backstays support the mast when beating into heavy weather with the staysail set, but can be left tied off on dedicated pad eyes by the cap shrouds in lighter airs.

Her sails are fairly heavy cruising cloth, but cut to compensate. The mainsail is fully battened with three reefs and lazyjacks standard. The yankee is cut high enough to see under in busy areas and has long sheet tracks for fine adjustment – the staysail sheets off to the coachroof, giving a nice tight angle for closewinded sailing.

### Under way

I've sailed the 42 twice now. The first time the anemometer rarely dropped below 30kn and the seas had built up after a week of F7-8 winds. The second time we only had 2-5kn! Overall, she's well mannered, powerful, above

averagely quick for a blue water boat and comfortable enough to live aboard even when the going gets nasty. We set out with a double-reefed main and full staysail. In heavy seas and winds gusting to 40+kn we sailed her at 40-45° off the apparent wind, making a comfortable 6kn and even kept fairly dry in the cockpit. The more the weather threw at us the more she dug her rail in and got on with it. She tracks as if on rails and her steering gave no clues as to the ordeal we were putting her through. In one gust of 45+kn her coachroof portlights even took a ducking, but still she refused to abandon her course! Bearing off to a beam reach she shot up to an easy 8.5kn through the water and off the wind she simply flew when we unrolled the yankee. We surfed back into Falmouth's Carrick Roads at 10+kn on a broad reach, but never once did she appear unstable or over pressed. The second sail confirmed that she needs a decent spinnaker for light airs.

Under power she's obedient, if a little slow to turn. She cruises economically at 6.5kn at around 2,500rpm, with a top speed of close to 8kn. The insulation is good and, with the engine where it is, it's not too noisy for the occupants of the after cabin to sleep.

### Verdict

An impressively powerful passage maker, the Rustler 42 is built to make ocean passages at good speeds while looking after her crew along the way. If you're looking for a take-you-anywhere, long legged, blue water cruising yacht, customised and built to your own specification, then you should unquestionably pay a visit to the Falmouth riverside yard that is the home of Rustler, Bowman and Starlight Yachts.

#### For

- Solidly built by hand
- Well designed for long term cruising
- Steadfast performance in a blow

#### Against

- Limited headroom
- No access hatch in machinery room
- No opening portlights



### Insurance Price Guide

#### Rustler 42

Value £303,150: £1295.73 Premium, £750 Excess

Comprehensive insurance includes: £3,000,000 Third Party Indemnity and Legal Protection with all taxes paid. Cruising range: UK coastal and inland waters extended to include Continental waters Elbe to La Rochelle.

Premium is representative example of what it would cost assuming maximum no claims bonus has been earned and that the mooring is acceptable to the underwriters.

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